

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) A structure ~~comprising~~ comprising:
at least one proportional variable resistor suitable for electrically measuring unidirectional misalignment of stitched masks in etched interconnect layers, said ~~structure comprising~~ variable resistor comprising:
at least a first mask and a second mask that when superimposed comprise at least two test pads and two interconnects, wherein a the resistance between which can be measured the test pads is dependent on a distance along the interconnects between the test pads, and the resistance is indicative of the misalignment of the first and second masks.
2. (currently amended) The ~~invention structure~~ according to claim 1 ~~comprising at least one wherein the variable resistor comprises a~~ directly proportional variable resistor which exhibits an increased resistance based on a greater distance between the test pads.
3. (currently amended) The ~~invention structure~~ according to claim 1 ~~comprising at least one wherein the variable resistor comprises an~~ inversely proportional variable resistor which exhibits a decreased resistance based on a greater distance between the test pads.
4. (currently amended) The ~~invention structure~~ according to claim 1 ~~comprising wherein the interconnects comprise at least one stick type interconnect of a substantially~~ rectangular geometry.

5. (currently amended) The ~~invention-structure~~ according to claim 1 ~~comprising~~ wherein the interconnects comprise at least one hook type interconnect, wherein the hook type interconnect comprises:

an intermediate portion which is non-linear within a plane of the corresponding mask; and

two ends separated by the intermediate portion, wherein both of the ends extend from the intermediate portion in substantially the same direction.

6. (currently amended) A system for electrically measuring unidirectional misalignment of stitched masks in etched interconnect layers, said system ~~comprising~~ comprising:

at least one proportional variable resistor ~~comprising~~ comprising:

a reference mask comprising at least two test pads and at least one interconnect; and

a second mask comprising at least one interconnect, wherein a resistance between the test pads is dependent on a distance along the interconnects between the test pads; and

a probe for testing the resistance between the test pads along said interconnect of said reference mask and said interconnect of said second mask when said masks are superimposed.

7. (currently amended) The ~~invention-structure~~ according to claim 6, the at least one interconnect of said reference mask comprising at least one stick type interconnect of a substantially rectangular geometry.

8. (currently amended) The ~~invention-structure~~ according to claim 6, the at least one interconnect of said reference mask comprising at least one hook type interconnect, wherein the hook type interconnect comprises:

an intermediate portion which is non-linear within a plane of the corresponding mask; and

two ends separated by the intermediate portion, wherein both of the ends extend from the intermediate portion in substantially the same direction.

9. (currently amended) The ~~invention-structure~~ according to claim 6, the at least one interconnect of said second mask comprising at least one stick type interconnect of a substantially rectangular geometry.

10. (currently amended) The ~~invention-structure~~ according to claim 6, the at least one interconnect of said second mask comprising at least one hook type interconnect, wherein the hook type interconnect comprises:

an intermediate portion which is non-linear within a plane of the corresponding mask; and

two ends separated by the intermediate portion, wherein both of the ends extend from the intermediate portion in substantially the same direction.

11. (currently amended) The ~~invention-structure~~ according to claim 6, ~~said system comprising at least one wherein the variable resistor comprises an~~ inversely proportional variable resistor which exhibits a decreased resistance based on a greater distance between the test pads.

12. (currently amended) The ~~invention-structure~~ according to claim 6, ~~said system comprising at least one wherein the variable resistor comprises a~~ directly proportional variable resistor which exhibits an increased resistance based on a greater distance between the test pads.

13. (currently amended) A method of measuring stitched mask misalignment in etched interconnect layers, the method comprising the steps of:
providing a reference mask comprising at least two test pads;
providing a second mask comprising at least one interconnect;
superimposing said reference mask and said second mask to provide at least one proportional variable resistor between the test pads over the interconnect of the second

mask, wherein the resistance between the test pads is dependent on a distance along the interconnect between the test pads; and

electrically measuring the resistance of said at least one proportional variable resistor.

14. (currently amended) The method according to claim 13 further comprising the ~~step of~~ establishing an optimum resistance between said test pads, wherein the optimum resistance corresponds to a configuration in which the reference mask and the second mask are aligned.

15. (currently amended) The ~~invention structure~~ according to claim 14 ~~comprising the further steps of further comprising:~~

comparing ~~a the~~ measured resistance to said optimum resistance ~~and; and~~ adjusting the position of said masks to alignment.

16. (new) The structure according to claim 1, further comprising an electrical contact to electrically couple between the two interconnects, wherein the resistance between the test pads is further dependent on a distance along the electrical contact between the two interconnects.

17. (new) The structure according to claim 16, wherein the electrical contact is formed as part of the first and second masks on the same mask as at least one of the interconnects.

18. (new) The structure according to claim 1, wherein the variable resistor is formed by at most two layers comprising the first and second masks.

19. (new) The structure according to claim 1, wherein the two test pads are both formed by the first mask.